

REMARKS

The claims in the application remain 12-15 and 22-35.

Favorable reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

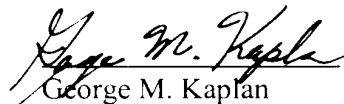
Claims 12-15 have been allowed with Claims 31-35 indicated allowable in paragraph 5 on page 4 of the final Office Action. Only Claims 22-30 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by newly-cited U.S. Patent No. 6,554,238 to Hibberd in paragraph four of the Final Office Action.

Hibberd is the U.S. national phase application of a PCT application filed November 10, 2000, i.e., before November 29, 2000. Therefore, the 35 U.S.C. §102(e) effective date of Hibberd is the date all §371(c)(1), (2) and (4) requirements were completed, namely April 23, 2002. The priority PCT application was published May 25, 2001, after the filing date of March 29, 2001 of the present application. Therefore, Hibberd cannot constitute a valid reference against the present application under any circumstances.

Accordingly, it is therefore respectfully submitted that since the only prior art rejection raised in the Final Office Action is legally invalid, all claims pending in the present application are now in condition for allowance. Please contact the undersigned attorney should there be any questions.

Early favorable action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,


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